

President Obama Signs Mitchell Bill to Block Congressional Pay Raise

WASHINGTON - President Obama today signed into law a bill sponsored by U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell to block the automatic Congressional pay raise for Fiscal Year (FY) 2011. The President's signature follows wide bi-partisan approval of H.R. 5146, the Cancel the Pay Raise for Members of Congress in Fiscal Year 2011 Act, by both the House and Senate late last month. The legislation was introduced by Mitchell and his colleague Rep. Jim Matheson of Utah. Companion Senate legislation, S.3244, was offered by Senator Russell Feingold.

"To raise Congressional pay at a time when so many families are still struggling to make ends meet would be unconscionable and glaringly out of touch," said Mitchell, who has led House efforts to stop Congressional pay raises since taking office in 2007. "I am pleased that President Obama has signed this bipartisan legislation into law. This sends an important message. The American people are not getting a raise this year and neither should Congress."

The legislation was backed by two prominent government watchdog groups: the National Taxpayers Union and The Council for Citizens Against Government Waste.

Pete Sepp, executive vice president of the National Taxpayers Union said, "The way Members of Congress spend on themselves reflects how they spend on other programs, so this law is one step toward restoring the confidence of taxpayers in the budget process. Enacting Congressman Mitchell's legislation is important because of -- not in spite of -- a federal budget amounting to trillions of dollars. Not only will special interests now have even less of an excuse to complain about much-needed cuts to their pet projects, the people who pay government's bills will know that their lawmakers are ready to make a personal contribution toward getting the deficit back under control. Citizens care about issues like Congressional salaries because they can relate to them more directly than just about any other expenditure in the federal government. By getting this policy right, there's hope that even bigger and better fiscal

discipline may soon follow."

Tom Schatz, president of the CCAGW added, "The Council for Citizens Against Government Waste applauds Sen. Russ Feingold, Rep. Harry Mitchell and Rep. Jim Matheson for successfully leading the charge against an automatic congressional pay raise for Fiscal Year 2011. At a time when the national debt has ballooned to \$13 trillion, unemployment hangs near 10 percent, and Americans continue to struggle, it would be irresponsible for members of Congress to award themselves a pay raise. Taxpayers are grateful that lawmakers have committed to cut at least one unnecessary expenditure during this economic crisis."

Mitchell, who has led efforts to stop Congressional pay raises since taking office in 2007, introduced H.R. 4255, the Stop the Automatic Pay Raise for Members of Congress in FY2011 Act, along with Rep. Ron Paul (R-Texas) late last year. It quickly gained broad bipartisan support, and as of this week, had 132 co-sponsors -- nearly a third of the members in the House.

Last year, Mitchell and Paul successfully led efforts to block the FY 2010 pay raise after introducing similar legislation, H.R. 156, which garnered 118 bipartisan co-sponsors. As a result, members of Congress did not receive an anticipated \$4,700 raise in 2009, which has saved taxpayers approximately \$2.5 million. [Source: [The Hill](#), February 24, 2009]

Mitchell and Paul also introduced legislation to block the FY2009 pay raise, which, despite gaining 34 bipartisan cosponsors, did not reach the floor of the House for a vote. Mitchell offered a similar bill in 2007, H.R. 2934, to block the FY2008 pay raise, which attracted 29 co-sponsors.

For FY 2011, Members were scheduled to receive a 0.9 percent adjustment, which would increase the base member salary by \$1,600. [Source: [Congressional Research Service](#), April 16, 2010]

In 2008, when Mitchell received a pay raise over his objection, he donated his pay raise to Arizona charities. Mitchell did the same with his 2009 pay raise, most recently donating his pay raise to 17 local organizations. [Source: [The Arizona Republic](#), March 10, 2010]